MILLIE

OLIVE·PERCIVAL

HER ♥ BOOK

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Ex Libris

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

The Olive Percival
Collection of
Children's Books

MILLIE.

BOSTON
D. LOTHROP & Co.

MILLIE.

Out upon the pleasant veranda sits good Millie, with the darling little baby Lily in her arms, while, near her, three-years-old Daisy plays and chatters away in her sweet, lisping voice.

They make a lovely picture in a frame-work of green vines, though there is no one to look at it save the bright-winged birds and butterflies that flit among the flame-colored blossoms of the honeysuckle over-head.

Millie did not always look as contented and happy as she does now. She was once a poor slave upon a southern plantation.

All day long she was obliged to work hard in the burning sun, and whenever she paused to rest, cruel blows, from the whip of the hard-hearted task-master, fell upon her cringing shoulders.

Once God gave her a dear little babe, not fair, like the sweet Lily she now holds in her arms, but its dark cheek and brow were beautiful to her, and she loved it with all the fervor of her warm heart.

For a while she was permitted to remain in her little cabin to take care of it; but at length her master said she must not spend any more time in idleness; so, with many tears, she left her dear little baby in its bed alone, and went out in the field again to work.

She was allowed to go home every few hours to see to her little one, but it needed constant and tender care, for want of which

it moaned and moaned, until it moaned its little life away.

Oh, how that poor mother wept when she found that the dark eyes of her darling were closed, never more to open! And, when she saw its dear form laid away from her sight under the ground, there fell upon her heart a deep gloom which nothing could dispel.

Poor Millie had never been taught about the dear Saviour who took little children in his arms and blessed them when he was upon earth, and who now receives them as lambs to his bosom when they are called to Heaven.

She thought that all of her little baby was buried in the ground, never having learned that its body was nothing more than a garment which covered the real living and loving child. No sweet promises from the Bible came to her mind to soothe and comfort her;

all was darkness, and her only hope was that she, too, might soon be laid to rest beside her sweet babe.

But God did not forget that poor slave mother, and there soon came a better day for poor Millie.

You all know how our good President, Abraham Lincoln, now gone to his reward in Heaven, said, one day, that slavery should be no more, and the many thousands of men, women, and children, groaning in bondage, were set free.

Millie was among the rest, and it was not long before she found a pleasant home with a kind Christian lady, who taught her to read the Bible, in which she learned of the Saviour, and of the bright Heaven where her sweet babe had gone.

Now, as she sits holding the little fair Lily in her arms, she thinks of her own, dusky-

browed child that once nestled there; but her tears no longer fall, nor is her heart heavy any more, for she knows that her precious one is safe, — safe in the beautiful land just "beyond the river," and that some time, if she is good and faithful here, she will go to her child, though it can no more return to her.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH-DAY PARTY.

JULIA and Charlotte were twin daughters of Mrs. John Gray; but as unlike in their personal appearance as in character.

Charlotte, who was usually called Lottie, had blue eyes, and light hair, which hung in thick, clustering curls over her shoulders. She was affectionate, but impulsive; betraying every feeling either of joy or anger, just which for the moment was in the ascendency; like a mountain lake mirroring in its crystal waters both cloud and sunshine. She was liberal in giving; often ready to bestow the last penny of her weekly allowance upon any poor beggar-child whom she met. But she

was also selfish in too often showing a preference for her own comfort or pleasure, even to the discomfort of others.

Julia had a dark, but clear complexion, and black hair, which obstinately refused to curl. She was quiet and gentle, loving unobtrusively but deeply; keenly sensitive to pain or pleasure, but expressing more in the depths of her soul-lighted eyes than by any outward demonstration of feeling. Those who were not well acquainted with her would have called her cold-hearted; but like the deepest streams, which run the smoothest, so was the deep current of her feelings. She was not so attractive to strangers as the more sprightly, animated, and impulsive Lottie; but the one upon whom her mother could always rely for many little acts of disinterested kindness, for she was ever ready to make the happiness of others her own.

They had four brothers younger than themselves. Herbert, the eldest, resembled Julia in character; next to him was William; then Arthur and Frank; but the pet of the whole household was little Minnie, about two years old.

Mr. Gray's house stood on a gentle elevation of land sloping to the south and west. Groups of weeping elms were scattered over the lawn, whose long branches drooped to the very ground, as if mourning for the ancestral dead who had planted them there. In the rear of the house was a fine grove of chestnut and walnut trees; and, stretching far beyond, were fields and pastures, hills and valleys, which presented to the eye of the observer an ever-varying landscape.

The house itself was antique in style, having been built by Mr. Gray's paternal grandfather. It had always been kept in thorough

repair and still afforded an enviable dwelling-place for the children of the fourth generation.

On the southern aspect of the slope were numerous beds of flowers; for each child, down to Frank, had its own little garden to cultivate.

At the time our story commences Julia and Lottie had just completed their twelfth year, and, agreeably to a promise which their mother had made them, were to have a birth-day party, or, as Lottie playfully remarked, "a celebration of their arrival into their teens." Many of the children of the neighborhood, both boys and girls, were to be invited.

It was in the beautiful month of June, and, if the weather were favorable, the tea-table was to be spread in the grove under the shade of some of the chestnut-trees; and for several

preceding days it was a busy household in its preparations for the festival. Quaint old china, which for many years had been only occasionally disturbed, was now wakened from its memories of bygone days, by being plunged into a bath of foaming suds, and coming out quite triumphant in all its original brightness.

Mrs. Gray superintended the removal of the china from the shelves, and left Julia and Lottie to attend to the washing of it. After finishing their task, — to them a pleasant one, — the next thing to be done was to carry the dishes to the grove, and arrange them on the table there. As the servants were all busy, Mrs. Gray commenced carrying them herself, hardly daring to trust them to the children; but the unselfish eye of Julia soon detected her mother was suffering with one of her severe headaches, and finally prevailed

upon her to leave the work for her and Lottie to finish, while she laid down for a little while to rest.

Carefully and diligently they continued their journeys, until about half the dishes had been removed, when Lottie said she "was tired travelling back and forth, and was going to call Nancy — one of the servants — to carry the dishes, while she and Julia stayed in the grove and arranged them."

"But," said Julia, "that will not be right; for you know mother said Nancy was so careless she was afraid to trust her; besides, she has other work to do."

"Well," replied Lottie, "she might come and help us for a little while. At any rate, I shall not bring any more of them; so you may call Nancy to help you or not, just as you please."

Julia made no reply, but continued carry-

ing the dishes, while Lottie, enjoying the cool and pleasant shade of the trees, stayed and arranged them. This being completed they proposed to ornament the table with flowers, and immediately engaged the willing services of Herbert and Willie to bring the flowers from their gardens.

Little Minnie, who had been quietly amusing herself, when she saw her sisters surrounded by the flowers, left her play, and for a while was quite contented with the rejected ones her sisters had given to her; but before long her little fingers were busy among those selected for the bouquets, and a gentle remonstrance, oft repeated, was hardly sufficient to spare them from her touch.

Lottie had just completed the arrangement of a beautiful bouquet, and was selecting flowers for another, when, turning round, she found Minnie had taken it from the vase,

and was smelling of a beautiful rose-bud which crowned the centre. Hastily rising, she rudely snatched it from the child's hand, saying, "There, Minnie, you shan't have another flower, and you shall not stay here another minute."

"I'll go and tell mamma," said the sobbing child.

"Well, I don't care if you do; only don't come here again," replied Lottie.

Julia, who, but a moment before had gone to speak to Arthur and Frank, who were making rather too much noise under their mother's window, returned just in season to catch the last words, but too late to prevent Minnie's sudden and crying entrance into her mother's room.

"O Lottie!" she said, "how could you let Minnie go and disturb mother, when you

knew she had such a dreadful headache, and was trying to get a little nap?"

"Well; Minnie wouldn't let the flowers alone, and I couldn't have her spoiling them,' replied Lottie.

"But we have plenty more in the garden," said Julia, "and I would rather she should have pulled all these to pieces than to have had her disturb mother. Besides we might have put them into some water, and arranged them while Minnie was taking her nap."

"Well; I don't like to wait after I begin a thing; I want to finish it right straight off; besides, I forgot mother was lying down. I am right sorry Minnie disturbed her," said Lottie, her better feelings gaining the ascendency.

That very afternoon, as one child after another asked Lottie for a flower from her garden, cheerfully and without any hesitation

she gratified their wishes, until she had stripped it entirely. So it was not because she valued the flowers so highly that she refused to let Minnie stay and enjoy them; but, being so much engrossed in the carrying out of her *own* plans, she did not stop to consider the consequences. With a little effort on her part, Minnie would have been easily diverted from her mischief, and would not have been sent off crying to her mother's room. There was no way in which Lottie more frequently betrayed her selfishness than in her persistency to carry out her own plans, even at the expense of others.

Julia immediately returned to the house, went to her mother's room, and soon came back with Minnie, who sat quietly by her side, while Julia told her amusing stories, aided also by the repentant Lottie.

At half past four the children were all

assembled on the lawn, and it was indeed a beautiful sight to see so many bright and happy faces together.

After having had some merry games, in which all could join, Mr. Gray proposed they should visit a beautiful cascade about half a mile from the house. A delightful walk through the grove led to it, and the children joyfully acceded to the proposition, — Julia and Lottie being quite as eager to go as any of the others. They had gone only a short distance when Julia discovered that Ada Vinton was not with them, and, hastily retracing her steps, found her seated under one of the elm-trees.

"Don't you want to go and walk with us?" said Julia, as she approached Ada.

"If I could, I would like to very much; but grandmother said she hoped I would not exert myself too much this afternoon, and get

sick, and I feel quite tired already. But please, Julia, don't stay with me," she said, as she saw Julia about to seat herself by her side. "Please don't stay, for I should be very, very sorry to have you lose your walk. I will just sit quietly here and be resting until you get back."

Now, if my readers suppose that Julia was entirely free from selfishness, they will give her the credit of possessing a character which but few, if any one, ever possessed. Her daily prayer was that she might have grace given her to keep her from the indulgence of this sin, and that she might find her happiness in striving to make others happy.

She wished exceedingly to join the children in the walk, and was strongly tempted to yield to Ada's request. For a moment she was almost sorry she had turned back, and wished she had not made the discovery till

FELTER

they had reached the cascade. But, looking down into the sweet face of the delicate child, whose feeble constitution had been the cause of much suffering and self-denial to her, Julia felt reproached and ashamed to think she should have wished to leave her.

"Ada dear," she said, kissing her, "I should truly enjoy staying here with you a great deal more than going with the others; so please let me stay."

Ada could no longer refuse the earnest request. After she was sufficiently rested, they visited Julia's flower-bed, and from the remaining flowers Julia made a pretty wreath, and placed it upon the fair brow of the fragile Ada. Then they sauntered to the grove and seated themselves to await the return of the children. The time passed pleasantly and quickly away; and when they all came back full of enthusiastic delight, not one feeling of

regret entered the generous heart of Julia that she had not accompanied them. She had been happy in making Ada happy, and had had her reward. Truly, "the liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The children were delighted to have their supper in the grove. It was a novel thing to them; and, with keen appetites after their rambles, they enjoyed the bounties of the table. About sunset they dispersed to their several homes, feeling quite sure there never could have been such a delightful birthday party as this.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

The summer passed away, and with it summer joys. Autumn, too, has laid aside her brilliant drapery, and given place to stern, resolute winter. Christmas was approaching; and Julia and Lottie were very busy with their needles in preparing their Christmas gifts.

They were quite delighted one morning, about a week before the holidays, to find it was storming too violently for them to venture out to school, as they were glad of the additional time for finishing the different articles of fancy-work they had commenced.

In the afternoon, just as Lottie had nearly

completed a piece of embroidery for a pincushion, she found she had not quite enough of one of the shades to finish it.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "it is too bad! I can't get this cushion done till I get some more floss; and I wanted to have it all finished before night. There! I mean to find Herbert, and get him to go down to the store and buy me a knot of this shade."

"Look in my basket," said Julia, "and see if I haven't some of the same there." But the search was useless. "I am really sorry," she continued; "but you might be working on your mat now; and we can get the silk to-morrow, on our way to school."

"But I've set my heart upon finishing it this afternoon," replied Lottie. "I don't want to work on that mat, — I don't feel like it."

"Why, Lottie, you really wouldn't ask

Herbert to go out in this storm just to get a shade of floss for you?"

"Well, I can't finish the cushion if I don't; and Herbert is always so obliging."

Without giving her sister time to reply, she hurried downstairs to find her brother, who was seated by a cheerful fire, studying his lesson for the next day. He looked up from his book as Lottie entered the room, and for a moment she hesitated to make known to him her request. She felt it was too bad to ask him to leave his comfortable seat by the fire to go out in such a storm, — the distance of half a mile, — on such a trifling errand. But her earnest desires to carry out her own plans prevailed over her better feelings; and, going up to Herbert, she stated the case to him, and asked him if he wouldn't "just please go down to the store" for her.

Perhaps some of my readers feel quite indignant towards Lottie; and I think I hear some boy saying, "She ought to have been ashamed of herself. I wouldn't have stirred a step for her."

It certainly was very selfish, I admit; but Lottie was not always selfish. Many a time she had patiently and cheerfully helped this same brother in his lessons, as well as frequently performed many little acts of kindness for others.

Herbert was a noble, disinterested boy; and, though very fond of his sisters, yet he could not help thinking that Lottie was rather unreasonable in her demands.

"Won't it do just as well if I do the errand for you to-morrow?" he asked. "Can't you be doing something else this afternoon?"

"Why, yes, I suppose I can," replied

Lottie, "but I don't want to; for I was determined to get my cushion all done before I went to sleep to-night."

"But, Lottie, I don't believe you know how hard it storms; besides, I have just come home from school, and have taken off my boots. I wanted to learn my lesson as soon as I could, so as to have the rest of the afternoon to work on that little boat I'm making for Frank."

"Oh, you will have time enough to do that before Christmas! You can work on it to-morrow."

She didn't reason in quite the same way, however, when she wanted to carry out her own plans. The "to-morrow" didn't suit her.

"Well," replied Herbert, trying to smile, "I don't see but that I must go."

Fortunately his mother saw him, just as

he was putting on his coat, and, learning his errand, forbade his going. As soon as she found Lottie alone, she kindly endeavored to convince her how selfish and unreasonable she had been. Indeed, she had often tried to guard Lottie against the indulgence of her besetting sin. At first, — in her desires to accomplish her plans for the day, — Lottie could think only of her own disappointment. But, as soon as she was convinced she was in the wrong, she sought Herbert at once, confessed she had been very selfish, and told him she was right glad their mother had forbidden him to go.

Mrs. Gray's conversation with Lottie had led her to reflect upon her conduct towards some of her schoolmates only the day before. After the school was closed, she had proposed to the scholars that they should give a Christmas gift to their teacher, Mr. Stearns.

The proposition was unanimously accepted; and immediately an animated discussion arose, not only as to what they should give, but also in what manner to present the gift. Of the numerous plans suggested, none seemed to give entire satisfaction.

Some thought it best to raise what money they could, and place it in his hands to make his own selection. Others objected, and said it would be a much pleasanter surprise to him if they were to make the choice; but it was impossible for all to agree in the matter.

Finally, Lottie said, "Come, girls, just listen to me again; for I was the first one to propose the plan. I think, as we can't agree, we had better each one give him just what we please." At first this proposition was favorably received; but the better judgment of a few soon convinced the majority of the rest of the objections to such a method.

Lottie was disappointed and vexed at the failure of her plan. "Well, girls," she said, "you may settle the matter as you choose; but *I* shall have nothing more to do with it."

As she finished speaking, she turned from the group and commenced her preparations for going home.

Lottie was a general favorite; and, of course, they all felt badly to have her leave them in that manner, and say she would have nothing to do with the affair.

It is always unpleasant and trying to the feelings of a party to have one of their number leave them dissatisfied and vexed, particularly one who is a leader among them. Lottie knew very well that they would all feel badly, and was rather glad to have them; for she felt like punishing them a little for not accepting any of her plans, particularly the last. She hoped, if she left

them in that way, it might lead them to yield their wishes to hers, for the sake of having her with them.

But Ada Vinton was soon at her side, and, with characteristic gentleness, endeavored to convince Lottie that, if they all joined in the purchase of one article, it would be really of more value to their teacher than a quantity of little things, many of which would doubtless be useless to Mr. Stearns.

Lottie listened, not with very good humor, though really convinced by Ada's arguments; but she was not quite ready to admit it, or to make them happy by joining the circle again and withdrawing her proposition. So, bidding Ada good-by, she left the schoolroom. As soon as the scholars saw that their leader and favorite was really gone, they disbanded at once, quite disheartened.

If Lottie had not cared more for the grati-

fication of her *own* feelings than those of her friends, she would have returned at once, and made them all happy by admitting that their plan was the best; for she was convinced in her own judgment that it was.

After the conversation with her mother to which we have alluded, she saw how selfish her conduct had been in this matter, and resolved to go in season the next day to tell the girls, before school commenced, that she was ready to unite with them in their plans.

The next morning the sun rose bright and clear, dispersing the dark clouds of the previous day; and welcome as were its cheering rays, yet not more so than the bright face of Lottie to her school-mates, when, radiant with smiles and blushes, she frankly admitted to them she had been in the wrong, and was quite ready to acquiesce in their wishes. When Lottie saw how much hap-

piness she had given, and contrasted the happy appearance of the group before her with their downcast looks when she had so abruptly left them, two days previous, she felt more than ever ashamed of her conduct.

The entrance of Mr. Stearns put a stop to their conversation; but they remained after school to discuss with new pleasure the "Christmas gift," and, some of them having received suggestions from their parents, were soon able to come to a unanimous decision.

CHAPTER III.

MINNIE'S DEATH.

THE winter passed rapidly away to the happy family at the old homestead, as spring, ladened with her rich gifts of flower and song, returned once more to gladden the earth. Nature, roused from her long wintry nap, came forth decked in robes of richest verdure.

But one little flower of an immortal birth, drooped, and was, in love, removed to the celestial land. Minnie — "the little rose-bud," dearly loved and cherished by them all — was transplanted to the garden of the Lord. One link in the chain of love that bound their hearts together was removed

from earth and fixed in heaven, thither to draw their bleeding hearts. It was a deep sorrow to them all, but perhaps none of the children felt it so keenly as Julia; for, though so young, she had assisted her mother very much in the care of Minnie, who was always happy when with Julia; and in her sickness, the sweet, gentle tones of Julia's voice were so soothing to the little sufferer, that she always loved to have her sister with her. Julia could scarcely bear to leave her bedside, but regarded it as a great privilege to be with her. Even this pleasure she often denied herself by spending sometimes nearly a whole afternoon with the younger boys, telling them stories, or reading to them, to keep them quiet, that Minnie might not be disturbed. As it was vacation at the different schools, the children were all at home, and she felt there was no other way in which

she could render her mother so much assistance, or Minnie a greater kindness, than in keeping them quiet.

Very likely many girls would have preferred not to have been in the sick-room, and to them it would have been no self-denial to have stayed away and amused the children. But it was not so with Julia. She was not happy to be separated from Minnie at all, only in the consciousness that she was rendering a greater service to others in so doing.

Dearly, too, did Lottie love and cherish the "little rosebud," as she fondly called Minnie. But she had never exercised self-discipline enough to restrain her emotions, so that, whenever she went into the room of the little sufferer, she gave way so unrestrainedly to her feelings that it distressed not only her mother, but Minnie also.

But Minnie's sickness was not a very pro-

tracted one, and, when finally released from suffering, and she had gone to dwell with Him who, when on earth, took little children in His arms and blessed them, it was the thoughtful Julia, with her own heart bleeding, who unobtrusively performed many little acts of kindness, so grateful to the sorrowing heart. But Lottie shut herself up in her own room, too much absorbed in her own grief to think of others, and by its excessive indulgence rendered herself quite unfit to be of any comfort to those around her. Even the children almost shunned the society of their hitherto joyous Lottie.

Julia, though a child in years, possessed that mature thoughtfulness for others which springs from a truly generous heart. She knew it would be selfish in her to exclude herself from the family circle in order to give

vent to her own feelings, but, on the contrary, sought in every way possible to comfort all the others. And she experienced a full reward in the affectionate caresses of the children, and the quiet look of love and gratitude with which her mother acknowledged her kind attentions. In striving to comfort others, peace took possession of her own heart. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Unobserved, she entered the chamber of death, and, with her own hand, arranged the flaxen curls to fall lightly around the face of the little sleeper, just as she had worn them when in health; and so peaceful and beautiful was the appearance of the little casket which had held the priceless gem, one would have hardly thought they were looking upon death, but upon the peaceful slumber of a little dreamer.

A RAINY DAY AT SCHOOL.

"Close the curtains gently, softly;
Shut the golden sunlight out;
Bid the children 'neath the window
Hush their laugh and merry shout;
Push aside the snowy cover,
Over which dim shadows creep;
Then draw near, and gaze in silence, —
Little Minnie's gone to sleep.

"Look! those flaxen curls are lying
Lightly on her brow of white;
While the long, dark, silken lashes
Close around those orbs of light;
And, from lips but slightly parted,
See the tiny pearl-gems peep;
While a low voice seems to utter, —
'Minnie's only gone to sleep.'

"Why in sorrow bends the mother
Fondly o'er her darling now;
Covering with earnest kisses
Hand and cheek, neck, lip, and brow?
Why burst forth those cries of anguish,
Wailings bitter, sobbings deep?

Let's kneel down, and softly whisper, –
'Mother, Minnie's gone to sleep.'

"Gone, but not to briefly slumber,
As when here she closed her eyes,
Whilst thy heart kept time within thee
To thy soothing lullabies.
Now, no clay holds back the spirit,
Soaring through the 'upper deep;
Only to earth's cares and trials
Has thy loved one gone to sleep."

CHAPTER IV.

AUNT HETTY AND HER CITY COUSINS.

We will pass over a few years, and the next time we look in upon our young friends is the summer in which they had reached their eighteenth year.

Mr. and Mrs. Gray had a large circle of acquaintance. Their generous and warm-hearted hospitality rendered their home attractive, and, during the summer, their house was usually filled with guests. Mrs. Gray endeavored to inculcate in the minds of her daughters a feeling of interest and responsibility in household duties, and a desire to contribute to the happiness of others. If engaged in the cares of her family, and

visitors called, she wished them to feel it was their duty as well as pleasure to receive and entertain them. They were fond of society, particularly the vivacious Lottie, and their personal attractions, together with their accomplishments, contributed much to the pleasure of their guests. It is true, however, that when seated in their own cheerful room, engaged either in reading or sewing, and the servant announced visitors whom they considered irksome, Lottie would sometimes protest against the necessity of seeing them. She would say, "I have no idea of leaving this interesting book to go downstairs and see such stupid people. I don't see what they came for. I wish they had stayed away."

Julia wished the same, but she did not think it was quite right to feel so. And when, under such circumstances, she entered the parlor from a sense of duty rather than

pleasure, yet, by endeavoring to make herself agreeable in the desire to make the call a pleasant one to the visitors, she almost always found her own feelings of repugnance overcome, and the self-denial she had practised brought its own reward of happiness.

Two of their city cousins, Wallace and Gertrude Winthrop, came to spend the summer months with them, with the understanding that Julia and Lottie should make them a long visit the following winter. They passed their time delightfully together in driving, walking, and sketching, and when in the house amused themselves with books, music, etc.

But their happiness was not a little disturbed by the arrival of "Aunt Hetty," as she was called, the widow of their father's brother, Mr. James Gray. She was in some respects a truly kind-hearted person, but one

who was rather strict, and indeed austere in her notions about young people.

"Times are not now as they used to be," she often said. Present times and the present generation stood very far below par in her estimation. Consequently she took it upon herself to do what she could for their improvement, by criticising the conduct of our young friends, and intruding her suggestions and observations whenever they came under her displeasure.

She was quite eccentric in her manners; so it often happened that the fun-loving Wallace made her the subject of his merriment, and, being fond of mimicry, he too often imitated her peculiarities. She was too observant not to be sensible of it, and often her feelings were deeply wounded when he but little suspected it.

Making sport of others is only another and

too frequent form of selfishness. It shows a preference for one's own heartless amusement to the feelings and happiness of others. It is in violation of the "Golden Rule," and a truly noble and generous nature will not indulge in such a habit.

Aunt Hetty was very kind to the sick, and ever ready to relieve the poor. The little property which had come into her possession at the time of her husband's death was never hoarded for her own personal indulgence, but she practised strict economy, often depriving herself of little comforts, in order that her limited income might enable her to share it with those who were in need.

But, notwithstanding this generous trait, she possessed another which springs from having the mind too much occupied with self; and that was a suspicious, jealous disposition. She was disposed to suspect others' motives,

and to imagine that they intended some personal affront, or did not treat her with the respect and attention which were due to her.

Mrs. Gray was truly attached to her sister-in-law, notwithstanding this characteristic had been the cause of much unhappiness to her, and, in their earlier married life, had occasioned some unpleasant misunderstandings.

Mr. John Gray and his brother James did not either of them marry until quite late in life. Mr. John married a lovely girl some years his junior, whose personal charms, together with her loveliness of character, endeared her to all who knew her.

Mr. James did not marry until some years later, and not until Aunt Hetty had passed the bloom of youth. She was not without some attractions, having a cultivated mind, and was quite accomplished in music.

In the earlier years of their married life,

the brothers were living in the city. Mr. John had a home of his own, and Mr. James boarded in the neighborhood. Aunt Hetty, having no family cares to confine her at home, visited her sister-in-law frequently, who, from the time of her marriage, had welcomed her not only to her house and heart, but always treated her with the kindness of a sister.

Mrs. John Gray was necessarily so much occupied with the cares of an increasing family, besides having a great deal of company, that she could find but little time for visiting either her sister or any one else. But she assured Aunt Hetty, who had abundance of leisure, that she was always welcome.

For a while everything went on smoothly, and scarcely a day passed that Aunt Hetty did not "run in," as she said, to see her sister. But, after a while, her visits grew less and less frequent, and when the sisters met, it

was with a little reserve and some constraint on the part of Mrs. James Gray. This altered manner quite troubled Mrs. John Gray, who, like a sensible woman, decided to have a frank talk with her sister, and learn if possible the cause.

"Mrs. James" admitted she had thought "Mrs. John" was getting tired of her frequent visits, and that it was a matter of indifference whether she called or not; therefore decided to stay away a while, and let her sister see that she was not dependent upon her for society. "Besides," she said, "if her sister cared anything about seeing her, she might call more frequently; she could, if she wished to, for she went to see her other friends." And, having presented only her side of the case to her husband, she was encouraged by him in her purpose to stay away.

As I said before, "Mrs. John" found but

little time to make calls, but if, whenever she did go out, either for shopping or to see some intimate friend, and did not *always* stop to see "Aunt Hetty," the latter regarded it as a personal offence.

Mrs. Gray was truly grieved when she learned the cause of the estrangement. She asked herself in what way she could possibly have given her sister occasion to think her society was irksome; or in what way she could have manifested any more kindness or affection towards her. She could only think that sometimes, when her own mind had been perplexed or wearied, inadvertently she might not have greeted her sister with her accustomed cordiality. Not unfrequently she had been obliged to leave Aunt Hetty to her own amusement for a while, thinking it was treating her with greater kindness, because

with less formality, than to neglect pressing duties to remain constantly with her.

Mrs. Gray had not then learned, as she did afterward, that Aunt Hetty was rather unreasonable in her demands upon others, which, if her friends failed to satisfy, they were at once suspected of entertaining towards her not only the feeling of indifference, but of dislike also.

But now that Mrs. Gray understood her sister better, she was constantly on her guard, and resolved in future, if possible, to prevent any more suspicions of this nature entering the mind of Aunt Hetty. And many were the little acts of kindness she bestowed upon her, even at the cost of much personal discomfort and sacrifice.

In after years, when Mrs. James Gray was left a widow and visited "Mrs. John,"—sometimes making it her home there for months

together, — she demanded, because she expected, the unwearied attentions of the whole family to be bestowed upon her. Was this selfish or not? If she had been as liberal in her attentions to others as she was in the bestowment of her charities upon the poor, her mind would have been less occupied with self, and, as a consequence, would not so frequently have questioned the motives and conduct of others towards her.

But we will return to our young people, whom we left in the full enjoyment of each other's society. The weeks passed away only too rapidly, and the time drew near for the city cousins to return home. They were partially reconciled to the separation, in the hope of spending the next winter together; and almost immediately after "Thanksgiving" Julia and Lottie left their home for their uncle's in the city.

A happier family than Mr. Winthrop's could not have been found. Wallace and Gertrude had a large circle of acquaintances, among whom Gertrude stood pre-eminent. She was frank and cordial in her manners, while her ready wit and repartee drew around her attentive and admiring auditors. But the very gifts which rendered her so attractive were the cause of developing in her a form of selfishness unlike any I have mentioned. She was so fond of admiration that she could hardly enjoy the society of others, unless *she* could be the centre of attraction, and take the lead in conversation, which was usually about herself and her own affairs. Her fine descriptive powers often gave a charm to the most trifling incidents to herself, which she related with great vivacity and interest; but if the recital recalled a corresponding incident in the experience of any of her listeners,

or they attempted to speak of other matters, her restless and abstracted looks betrayed at once her indifference to conversation that did not in some way relate to herself.

CHAPTER V.

ALBERT HOWE, AND JULIA'S MARRIAGE.

WHILE our young friends are enjoying themselves in the midst of a pleasant circle of mutual friends, we will retrace our steps, and dwell a moment on a point which dates some years back.

In one of the finest houses in the upper part of the city lived a Mr. Howe, whose son Albert I would like to introduce to my readers. He had two sisters older than himself, and, as his parents had lost one boy previous to Albert's birth, the announcement of another son was hailed with joy. Father, mother, and sisters were ever studying his happiness, and consulting his slightest wish. Was it

strange he should have grown to be a selfish man? — though in the earliest years of his childhood this trait was not so fully developed as afterward. He was a lively boy and full of glee when everything went smoothly with him, but ill-natured if thwarted in his purposes. So far as possible every wish was gratified, and the healthful lessons of self-denial, which even the infant scarcely twelve months old may learn, were withheld from him. Consequently, as he grew older, and his will stronger, he could not receive the slightest disappointment with patience. *Self-gratification* — the ruling spirit which governed him — strengthened with increasing years, until, when too late, his parents beheld with grief the consequences of their foolish indulgence.

At this period of our story, when our young friends were spending the winter with

their city cousins, Albert had just completed his twenty-third year. He was a frequent visitor at Mr Winthrop's. His pleasing address, together with a mind well informed upon the general topics of the day, made him a welcome guest. He had been religiously educated, and while making no professions of personal piety, yet he had great respect for it in others, and his moral character was unexceptionable. No party was considered complete without him; indeed, scarcely any gentleman could be found more genial or more generally popular than Albert Howe.

From the first evening of his introduction to Julia, he was not only completely charmed with the rare musical gift she possessed, but equally with her gentle, winning manners and lovely disposition. The interest which gave birth to love soon became mutual, and, on her return home, with the consent of

Julia's parents, they were engaged. Some there were who thought it strange that such a girl as Julia should have fancied Albert, but she loved him with all the strength and purity such a nature as hers is capable of.

In due time they were married, and, as Albert had come into the possession of a handsome property, they were able to surround themselves with all the luxuries they chose.

Julia, always studying the comfort and happiness of her husband, was ever ready to yield her wishes to his, when they did not conflict with her conscience; and she was so perfectly happy in her love, that she never doubted his equal readiness to consult her happiness.

Quite in contrast with his former life, Albert now spent all his evenings at home, flattering himself that in this respect he was

a model husband. But a cheerful parlor, which in the long winter evenings was rendered still more so by a bright wood fire, and an accomplished wife to study his every wish, was far more agreeable to him than going out would have been. But if Julia wished to spend an evening with her sister, or Cousin Gertrude, both of whom were also married, or accept any invitation to visit other friends, he was seldom disposed to go, and she was usually the one to yield.

Albert, however, was exceedingly liberal in providing for his household, and truly lavish in his expenditures to gratify the cultivated taste of his wife.

After the birth of a little girl, named "Minnie," in memory of Julia's sainted sister, — and for whom Julia had ever cherished an undying affection, — she experienced many heart-aches to which she had previously

been a stranger. The child was feeble and sickly from its birth, requiring constant care, and its very feebleness endearing it to the anxious heart of the fond mother. Patiently and lovingly she tried to soothe its cries. It was a new experience for Albert to be tried by such sounds, and, though he loved the child, he could hardly brook the disturbance of his midnight slumbers; consequently, he was often impatient, not unfrequently blaming Julia for what he considered her injudicious management. Then, when his patience was quite exhausted, he would insist upon taking the babe, to try if he could still her; and the tender heart of the sympathizing mother, afraid not to yield compliance to his request, was compelled to consign the little sufferer to his awkward and inexperienced care, which only aggravated the trouble, and increased his impatience.

As Minnie grew older he became increasingly fond of her, and loved with devotion his only child. Her health gradually improved, though she not unfrequently had severe illnesses, which always filled the hearts of her parents with deep anxiety and alarm; for how could they part with her, who was now the very sunshine of their life? Each time she recovered they seemed, if possible, to prize more highly the little treasure committed to their trust. Julia sometimes tried to check Albert's idolatrous affection for the child, for she feared they were making her too much of an idol, and bestowing upon the gift the love they ought to render to the Great Giver.

It was soon after Minnie had completed her third year that she was taken dangerously ill. For several days her spirit seemed hovering between life and death, and with alter-

nating hopes and fears her parents watched over her by night and day. It was after a night of great suffering, that, just at day-break, Minnie fell into a gentle slumber. All night silent but fervent petitions were ascending from the mother's heart, that, if consistent with the will of God, her darling might be spared. Each moment she continued sleeping so, quietly strengthened the hope that the crisis which her sleep indicated would prove favorable. After some hours she opened her eyes, and the sweet look of recognition, as she met the fond gaze of the loving parents, thrilled their hearts with new hope. She had at other times been brought apparently as near to death and then recovered.

—— "as she then was spared,
So now strong hope sustained them with the fond belief
She still would live; though o'er her couch,
By night and day, they watched with anxious hearts.

They are not ready for the messenger of death, —
Who ever is? Indeed, they scarcely dreamed
Of his approach till there he stood.
— How oft an unexpected guest!
But, lo! a dark shade passes o'er her face,
Thrilling their hearts with agonizing grief;
Full well they know what it doth mean.
Some speak of death as if it were
A monster grim; his shadow, this dark shade.
But, no! May we not rather say
That angel pure, whose name she bore,
Has come with seraph wing
To bear her to the world of light,
And 'twas her shadow that we saw?"

As the sweet spirit of little Minnie passed to the better land one wild, unsubmissive cry of grief broke forth from the father's lips; while the mother, with her own heart all quivering and bleeding in its anguish, remained passive in the hands of "Him who doeth all things well."

CHAPTER VI.

DESOLATE HEARTS.

DESOLATE indeed were the hearts of those sorrow-stricken parents; but Julia must turn from her own grief to comfort Albert, who, absorbed in his own loss, not only claimed all Julia's sympathy, but added greatly to her grief by the unsubmissive spirit he continually manifested.

There is no lesson which, if rightly improved, is better calculated to check the spirit of selfishness than that of affliction. Many, however, seem to feel there is no sin in the indulgence of grief. Their minds continually dwell upon their own loss, making no effort to enter into the joys and sorrows

of others, but, wrapping themselves in their own mantle of affliction, would fain cast its folds around all with whom they meet. But it was not so with Julia. Faithfully discharging the duties which devolved upon her, and ministering to the wants of others, instead of seeking the seclusion her heart longed for, she endeavored by a cheerful countenance and ready sympathy to make others happy, seldom speaking of her own sorrow. It was often a great trial to her to receive visitors, many of whom, as is usually the case, call at such times merely as a matter of etiquette, or from idle curiosity; and to such Julia's calmness was a mystery, for they could not appreciate the motive which governed her.

There were some of Julia's friends who truly sympathized with her in her new affliction. But the shade of sadness which fell

upon their hearts when they first heard of Minnie's death soon faded away in their own cares and pleasures, and Julia's heart keenly felt the truthfulness of the following lines: —

"When first we knew the love-eclipse,
Sent through our lives to stay,
We thought around these quivering lips
Smiles never more could play;
That kindly souls, by nature glad,
Hearing our sorrow, must grow sad,
And in our presence, ever after,
The lightest-hearted check their laughter.
It was not so. For a brief space
Friends greeted each wan, tearful face
With looks of answering woe;
Then the world's river rolled along
Its olden course through mart and throng;
How could that restless flow
Of life and action turn aside
To mourn because one wavelet died?

"And thus we learned that tears are vain,
And vain each uttered moan;
The clouded soul must hoard its rain
Till it can weep alone.
In every life-skein knots of ill
Unravel at the Lord's good will;

Why dim the hopes on others dawning
Because our own are turned to mourning?
When merry tongues to mirth beguile,
We give them back a ready smile,
With calm and cheerful air.
It must be so. Light speech and jest
Are proffered to wayfaring guest;
We ask him not to share
The dull, dark chamber where, at eve,
We sit in solitude and grieve."

But the sympathy which fell like sweet balm upon her wounded spirit was the true and never-changing sympathy of Him who wept at the grave of Lazarus.

Albert, alas! was seeking in the cares of business to stifle his grief, and if in the busy mart his mind was for a while diverted, yet when he returned home, and no more greeted him

"The eye, the lip, the cheek, the brow,
The hands stretched forth in gladness"--

he felt, with bitter sadness

"How dim and dismal is my home! — a sense
Of thee spreads through it like a haunting ill;
For thou — forever, thou hast vanished thence!
This — this pursues me, pass where'er I will,
And all the traces thou hast left but fill
The hollow of thine absence with more pain."

Even Julia's love and self-sacrificing efforts failed to rouse him to any attempt at cheerfulness; but, in moody silence, or murmuring against his God, he sat by his now saddened fireside.

At length Albert resolved to give up house-keeping, hoping that different scenes might help him to forget his loss. He did not seek at the right fountain for that peace which passeth all understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away. He did not receive in a right spirit the affliction, which, by the grace of God, might have been to him one of Heaven's richest blessings.

Selfishly seeking his own gratification in

leaving the house hallowed by so many associations with their sainted child, he heeded not Julia's tearful remonstrance. She felt, in leaving that home, it would be like severing anew the ties which bound her to that gleam of sunshine, — her precious child, — loaned from Heaven for a brief space. Each silent room spoke to her of the departed, and often, in her heart-yearnings for her little Minnie, she fancied she heard the music of her tiny feet crossing the threshold of the door, and she was ready to exclaim: —

"Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight;
There thou dost glide before me still,
A form of light!
I feel thy breath upon my cheek,
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak,
Till, oh, my heart is like to break."

After Julia's first expression of unwilling-

ness to dispose of their house, she said no more about it, and her husband tried to justify himself in the belief that she was reconciled to the arrangement.

The first approach of warm weather made Albert impatient to carry out his plans, which were, to spend some weeks at Mr. Gray's, and some weeks in travelling.

Though Julia longed for the sympathizing love with which she knew her own dear mother was waiting to welcome her, yet when the time drew near for their departure, and her own hands must be employed in stripping their once happy home of all its charms, her spirit shrank from such a task. Each gem of art, indeed each article of furniture, told their own tale of the departed to that mother's heart. Sweetly and uncomplainingly Julia performed her labors. But when she entered the now silent nursery,

and saw the little play-house standing in one corner, with the toys scattered around just as Minnie had left them, and which no hand since had been allowed to touch, it seemed almost an impossibility to disturb these sacred relics. She opened the door of Minnie's wardrobe, and the sight of a little pair of half-worn shoes sent thrilling through that mother's heart the bygone music of the bounding step of her now angel child. Hanging on one of the nails was the little straw hat which had so often shaded the fair brow and the golden curls of her little prattler. But the "sunlit smile," which so oft had greeted her from under its brim, had passed away into the sweet peace of heaven's own light.

"'Tis a dear little hat, and it hangs there still,
And its voice of the past bids our heart-strings thrill,
For it seems like a shadow of days passed o'er,
Of the bright little one who that hat once wore

"'Tis a dear little hat, for each simple braid
Tells that oft o'er its plaiting those fingers played,
And many a wreath for its crown hath been twined,
To the grateful taste of her * youthful mind.

"Yes, there silent it hangs with its curling front
Still as playfully rolled as had been its wont;
But the golden ringlets that waved below
Have curled their last clusters long ago.

"Ay, the hat is the same, but it shades no more
Those light blue eyes, as in days of yore;
And the sunlit smile that danced o'er that brow
Can but light up our hearts' sad memories now.

"Sad memories they are: o'er their quivering strings
Each breath of the bygone a tremor brings;
And joys that we fain would waken again
In memory are wreathed with a thrill of pain.

"Then recall not the past, though the dimpled hand
May never again clasp the braided strand,
Though the breeze no longer bear the tone
Of the ringing laughter of childhood's own.

"Ay, I see her now, with the holy light
Pouring broad o'er her brow with radiance bright;
And I hear the tones which in heaven have birth,—
Oh, call her not back to this saddened earth!"

Overwhelmed with such vivid pictures of the past, her stricken heart, tempest-tossed

* In the original, *his* instead of *her*.

on the raging waters of its own desolation, Julia, with every feature, ay, and every limb quivering

"with emotion,
And anguish long suppressed,"

could no longer keep closed the floodgates of her grief, and hot, agonizing tears streamed down her pallid cheeks. While these waves of anguish were sweeping o'er her soul, the Unseen whispered, "In my Father's house is a purer, brighter mansion for thee and thy little one."

The wild blast had *bowed*, not *broken*, the feeble reed. Julia was subdued; she knew and now *felt*,

"God took her in his mercy,
A lamb untasked, untried,"

and in the silence of that room yielded up her heart to the loving Saviour, who, when

he was on earth mingled his own tears with the mourning ones; and, in the sweet assurance of his love and sympathy, rose strengthened for her task.

CHAPTER VII.

LOTTIE AND HER HUSBAND.

We will leave Julia for a while, to take one more look at Lottie.

Charles Morey, Lottie's husband, was a person of very different character from that of Albert Howe. The former was a noble-minded, generous-hearted man, and an unselfish, devoted husband.

Mutually loving each other, they mutually studied each other's happiness, so Lottie believed. But the selfish characteristics which marked her in her childhood sometimes made her thoughtlessly inconsiderate of her husband's comfort.

Her impulsive nature, together with a

highly nervous temperament, which she had never striven to overcome, rendered her at times very lively, and at others gloomy and desponding. It had been the cause of no little anxiety and unhappiness to the mother that the merest trifles either very much elated or depressed the spirits of her daughter. As a girl she had been in the habit of going to her mother with the most trifling trouble, whether real or imaginary. But is it not selfish in children, when they cannot see everything in a roseate light, to indulge in feelings of discontent and peevishness? — for it pains the heart of every sympathizing parent, and often, after the cloud has passed from the child, its shadow still rests upon the mother's heart.

When everything went smoothly with Lottie, her presence was like very sunshine; but the petty annoyances and trials, incident

to the life of every wife and mother, Lottie too often allowed to vex her mind, and ruffle her temper.

Too frequently, when her husband returned wearied and perplexed with the cares of business, instead of meeting the cheerful welcome so grateful to the heart of every man, the clouded brow, together with a detailed account of domestic annoyances, were his greeting home. And with these recitals were too often mingled repinings, because their very limited income would not allow her to keep another servant, or surround herself with the luxuries she desired. Had Lottie's mind been less occupied with self, she would have been more observant of the pain it gave her husband to be obliged to deny her anything she wanted. She did not consider that it was only by his close application to business he could even then meet the

expenses of his family. Was not this inconsiderateness of Lottie's a form of selfishness, to which many a wife and mother may plead guilty?

That we may become better acquainted with Lottie and her family, we will imagine ourselves members of her household for a little while.

"Oh, there comes the carriage! there comes the carriage!" exclaimed three rosy-cheeked children. "Grandma Morey is in it, for the driver is coming right up to the door," said Ernest, the eldest of the group.

Lottie threw down her sewing at this announcement, and hastened to the door to greet her husband's mother.

As soon as their grandmother entered the parlor the children gathered around her, and almost smothered her with hugs and kisses.

"You cannot doubt you are most welcome,

mother, and as truly so to me as to my children," said Lottie; "and Charles, too, will be delighted to see you when he comes home. But if you will come upstairs I will show you your room."

Just as they returned to the library, and the grandmother was seated in a comfortable arm-chair, the door opened, and little Cora entered.

"Mother," said Lottie, "here is a little one you have never seen. Cora, my dear, go and give grandma a kiss."

"Baby Cora," as she was usually called, was soon seated on her grandmother's lap, quite as contented as if she had always known her.

Mrs. Morey had never spent more than a few days at a time with Lottie, and in those short visits her daughter-in-law had always treated her with the most thoughtful kind-

ness. But now her own home was broken up she had promised to spend the winter with her son and his wife. She was a lovely Christian woman, and Charles and Lottie rejoiced in having her gentle influence felt in the family circle.

"And now, mother," said Lottie, her face beaming with affection and pleasure, "you know you are to stay with us, not only all winter, but just as much longer as you can be contented."

While she was speaking Charles entered the room, and with unfeigned joy welcomed his mother. Soon after, the dinner-bell rung, and as Charles offered his arm to his mother to go into the dining-room, he said, "Mother, you have never seen us in our new home; it is a long, long while since you were here."

"Yes," she replied. "Everything looks

quite strangely to me here, but very pleasant, and I doubt not I shall soon feel at home. This dining-room seems much larger than the one in your other house, — is it not?"

"Yes, mother," he said, while a slightly troubled expression passed over his face.

"The other house, mother," replied Lottie, after they were seated at the table, "was really too small for our family, and quite inconvenient; so I told Charles we must move into a larger one before another winter. The rent of this is only three hundred dollars a year more than the other."

"Only three hundred dollars!" thought Charles. The former rent had been quite as much as he had felt able to pay; while the expense of moving, the replacing of old carpets with new, together with some new furniture which must be purchased, were expenses which Lottie, in her ambi-

tious desires, had not sufficiently considered. Neither did she know how many anxious moments and sleepless nights it had cost her husband in conning over how he should meet all these additional expenses. The supply of some wants only served to create new ones, and living in a larger and more expensive house led Lottie to think many things necessary to her comfort, which hitherto she had been able to do without.

"I thought your other house was very pleasant," said Mrs. Morey; "it was very sunny, but I suppose not so convenient as this."

"That was very old-fashioned," Lottie answered; "though we had one advantage in being there that we have not here, — and that was, a good, large yard for the children to play in. But I hope that when summer comes, Charles will be able to take us to

some watering-place to stay during the warm weather. Hardly any of my friends remain in the city in the summer."

Charles made no reply to this remark, but inwardly sighed, and, turning to his mother, said, "We did not forget you in our new home, and Lottie has taken great pleasure in furnishing your room as comfortably as she could, and it has always been called "Grandma's room." I am sorry, however, that it opens into the nursery, for I fear the children may disturb you; but you must not admit the little intruders when you wish to be alone."

"My room certainly looks very attractive," replied Mrs. Morey, "and I noticed many proofs of your wife's taste and consideration for my comfort."

For a few days, Lottie was all devotion to her mother-in-law, but her love of ease and

self-gratification soon gained the mastery over her.

Mrs. Morey had been in the house only a few days when she observed, with surprise and regret the unreasonable demands made upon her son by his thoughtless wife. In every way possible, though quietly and unobtrusively, she endeavored to relieve him of those domestic cares which more properly belong to the wife and mother. Thus, by degrees, Lottie not only allowed the children to be left almost entirely to the care of their grandmother, but gradually left many of the household cares to devolve upon her also. These were days of ease and self-indulgence to Lottie, and, when her health permitted it, she spent much of her time in visiting her friends. If her husband kindly suggested to her that he feared his mother had too much care, and it would be better for her to go out

more, Lottie always replied, "Oh, mother never wishes to go out, and she loves dearly to be with the children, and they with her. Why, Charles, you cannot think I would treat your dear mother with neglect, do you?" Then, imagining that her husband was displeased with her, she usually brought the gentle remonstrance to a close by such unrestrained weeping, that he was obliged to retract all he had said, and try to soothe her. A severe headache almost invariably followed, and Charles soon learned to keep silent upon the subject, which, nevertheless, still weighed upon him.

CHAPTER VIII.

JULIA AND LOTTIE RETURN TO THE HOME OF THEIR CHILDHOOD.

THUS the winter passed away, and as spring returned, a severe cold left Lottie's health so seriously impaired that it was thought advisable for her to leave the city, and spend a few months at her father's, in the country. The children were to follow in a few weeks, but in the mean time to remain under the care of their grandmother, Mrs. Morey.

Lottie could not bear the idea of separation from her husband and children, and at first strenuously opposed the arrangement, but was at length obliged to yield her consent.

This brings me to that period where we

left Julia in her sad preparations of breaking up house-keeping, previous to her return to her father's.

It was arranged that the sisters should return in company with each other. Accordingly, in the early part of May, one morning when the sun was shining brightly, and the music of the birds heralded the return of spring, Julia, endeavoring to repress her feelings in the presence of her husband, bade farewell to her once happy, now saddened, but still cherished home, and entered the carriage which stood waiting to receive her.

As she stopped before her sister's door, a new poignancy was added to her grief, when she beheld the leave-taking of that mother with her little ones. As she saw their arms twined lovingly about her neck, and her fond kisses so lavishly bestowed upon them, unable longer to endure the sight, the childless

mother sank back on her seat and wept bitterly. But at the sound of her sister's approaching footsteps, the falling tears were brushed hastily away, their companions driven back, and the floodgates closed upon them; and when her sister took her seat in the carriage, Julia, with a calm, sweet smile, was ready to welcome her, while Lottie threw herself back in the carriage, and for a few moments wept passionately.

As Julia thought of her own leave-taking of that desolate house which had once been such a joyous home to her, and contrasted all this with her sister's leave-taking of her little ones, it did seem a little incomprehensible to her that Lottie should indulge in tears; and it was not until after much effort on Julia's part that her sister rallied in the least.

Those who have been indeed bereaved will often be impressed with the selfish de-

spondency of those who do not know what real affliction is.

And so these sisters returned once more to the home of their childhood, and to the fond parental love awaiting them.

The sympathizing mother, who received to the parent nest her wounded bird, to nestle in her love once more, found herself again leaning upon, cheered and comforted by the unselfish devotion of her child. Julia more than ever devoted herself to the happiness of those around her, and, save the impress sorrow had stamped upon her brow; no one could have suspected how great had been her affliction. No tears were ever seen to dim her eyes; she would not

> "Dim the hopes on others dawning,
> Because her own were turned to mourning;"

and her wounded heart was blessed with the sweet peace of Heaven's own balm. "The

liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The pure country air proved beneficial to Lottie, and the hue of returning health bloomed once more upon her cheek. Again her step had the elasticity of girlhood, and at times her merry laugh might be heard ringing through the halls as in days of yore. At other times she was melancholy and silent, casting gloom upon those around her, because, in the impulses of her love, she knew not how to wait a few days, or at the most a few weeks longer, before she could see her children, or enjoy again the fond attentions of her devoted husband. And it was Julia who tried to cheer and divert her, though she, too, longed for the arrival of her own husband, for whom she had ever manifested a far more unselfish love than Lottie's love towards Charles. Patiently she listened to Lottie's

thoughtless repetition of her children's prattle, each word of which stung the heart of the childless mother with sad memories of the past. Had Lottie's thoughts dwelt more upon Julia's real affliction, and less upon her own short-lived privation, she would have spared her sister much hidden pain.

And here we will take leave of Julia and Lottie.

I have endeavored, my young friends, in the different characters introduced into this story, to illustrate some of the different forms of selfishness, even in those, who in some respects were truly generous. I have mentioned but a tithe of the endless forms it assumes. I would fain hope, however, that it may lead to reflection upon this subject, and that those who read these pages may make an application of the truth to themselves, instead of applying it to others.